

Tracing Your Roots with “The Legal Genealogist”



A mid-19th century family depicted in the Soldiers Memorial, 4th Delaware Regiment, Company A (Prints and Engravings, Delaware Public Archives)

On Saturday, November 5, Judy G. Russell, JD, CG CGL, known as “The Legal Genealogist” will present two programs at the Delaware Public Archives. The first presentation, at 10:30 a.m. is titled ***“Don’t Forget the Ladies” – A Genealogist’s Guide to Women and the Law.*** In early America, women were all too often the people who just weren’t there: not in the records, not in the censuses, not on juries, not in the voting booth. The common law relegated women to “protected” – second-class – status and understanding how they were treated under the law provides clues to finding their identities today.

The second program, titled ***Rogues, Rascals and Rascallions*** will begin at 1:30 p.m. Playing detective in court records can unmask those individuals that every family has. Learn to understand the criminal process in both federal and state courts and how to find the records to put meat on the bones of the skeletons one may have in their family’s closet.

Judy Russell is an attorney whose aim is to assist people understand the often arcane and even impenetrable legal concepts and terminology that are so very important to those who are studying family history. A graduate of the Rutgers School of Law-Newark, Russell also has a bachelor's degree in journalism from George Washington University in Washington D.C. She has worked as a newspaper reporter, trade association writer, legal investigator, defense attorney, federal prosecutor, law editor and, for more than 20 years, an adjunct member of the faculty at Rutgers Law School. She lectures on a wide variety of genealogical topics, ranging from using court records to understanding DNA testing.

The program is free to the public and will last approximately one hour. No reservations are required. For more information, contact Tom Summers (302) 744-5047 or e-mail thomas.summers@delaware.gov.

The Delaware Public Archives is located at 121 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard North in Dover. The Mabel Lloyd Ridgely Research Room is open to the public Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. On the second Saturday of every month the research room is open from 9 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Delaware Public Archives (DPA, archives.delaware.gov), an agency of the State of Delaware, is one of the oldest public archives programs in the United States. DPA serves the citizens of Delaware by identifying, collecting, and preserving public records of enduring historical and evidential value; ensuring access to public records for present and future generations; and advising and educating interested parties in the creation, management, use, and preservation of public records.